



UNDER THE IMMEDIATE PATRONAGE OF
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,
AND HER R. H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

THE MUSICAL WORLD,

A WEEKLY RECORD OF

Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence.

To know the cause why music was ordained;
Was it not to refresh the mind of man,
After his studies or his usual pain?
Then give me leave to read philosophy,
And, while I pause, serve in your harmony.
TAMING OF THE SHREW.

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It would be an idle ceremony for us to attempt any laboured proof of the importance of the duties, and the value of the services, attached to the office of Conductor at a musical performance; or of the worse than useless eminence, to which an individual is raised, who is invested with power he is unable to wield and clothed with a dignity he only contrives to render ridiculous.

The well-trained member of an orchestra is perfectly conscious, that there can be no faithful delineation of a composer's ideas, unless the closest attention is paid to each passage in detail. He justly regards himself as a unit among many; and confining himself to the proper execution of the part assigned to him, he leaves to another the task of determining the general expression of the whole. This duty of right appertains to the Conductor, whose isolated position enables him, if he be qualified for his post, to produce that grand result, which arises from the performance of numbers under the implicit direction of one. He is, or ought to be, the master-spirit of the band over which he presides—an impersonation of the mind of the composer. The Conductor should evince not only the imaginative glow of the poet, but also display a thorough acquaintance with the minutest details of the work entrusted to his superintending care. By his coolness, decision, urbane, yet inflexible demeanour, he should inspire the timid, check the presumptuous, and command the respect of all. He should exhibit a warm sympathy with the intentions of his author, and a perfect familiarity with the machinery by which they are to be developed. The mere possession of a love for whatever is striking or ennobling in the art, a faculty common, in a greater or less degree, to all who are endowed with a natural taste for the science of sweet sounds, is not a sufficient qualification for assuming the official baton. The requisites of a good Conductor, in addition to the technical knowledge which we have laid down as indispensable, should include the energy and tact which can control a fiery leader; a watchful

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apprehension of such passages as are apt to exercise an imperceptible influence on the performers, and to create a measure of uncertainty in point of time and expression; and the skill to humour what is technically termed "the swing" of an orchestra. These are points which a genuine Conductor would always keep in view, when directing the performance of a musical composition. For want of a strict, or, indeed, any attention to them, how often do we witness a Conductor, whose exertions are fully occupied in a continued struggle to catch the *time* which the band, or singers, have fallen into; too happy if he can succeed in this his primary object, to permit the *expression* to take care of itself. His utter inability to separate the component parts of the score in his mind, is shown by the wandering eye, the unsteady hand. A confused motion of his head, a tremulous grasp of his instrument of office, indicate his internal disquietude, and that last remnant of virtue, which cannot wholly exclude a sense of shame. Conscious of his imbecility, and half apprehensive that others observe it, the unhappy substitute for a Conductor flourishes his rod in mystic evolutions; in the midst of his enchantments lays it aside, resumes his seat at the piano, which he approaches with a supplicating glance, as if he expected its unconscious vibrations with his fingers, would solve his conjectures, and relieve his uncertainty.

The engagement of an inefficient Conductor in the direction of an orchestra, however small or limited its resources, inevitably leads to a neglect of details, and a general slovenliness in the execution of the music selected for performance. An insult is thereby offered to the memory of deceased, an injury inflicted on the reputation of living composers; a very equivocal compliment is paid to the good sense and correct taste of the audience, and certain disgrace is reflected on the management, which appoints, or endures, a person of such conspicuous incompetence.

MR. ATTWOOD'S SUCCESSOR AT ST. PAUL'S.

THE election, by the Dean and Chapter, of the Organist, or Music Director and Composer, to our Metropolitan Cathedral, is fixed to take place in the ensuing Easter week. Perhaps the reverend and learned divines, with whom the appointment rests, are not so well acquainted with the feelings of that portion of the public and profession, whose attention is excited by every thing relating to ecclesiastical music, as those individuals, who from their inability to assist a particular candidate, are likely to hear more disinterested opinions. We look forward with, we trust, pardonable anxiety, to the selection, from those who are willing to undertake the office, of the person best qualified to fulfil its duties.

Besides the candidates, there are three classes interested in the result of this election. They are the clergy, the laity, and the musical profession, to none of whom ought that science, which Martin Luther describes as "one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God, and nearly allied to divinitie," to be a matter of indifference. In our days of disquietude and hankering after change, an opportunity offers itself for the clergy, without incurring the imputation of needless innovation, to restore the high ceremonial of cathedral worship to its original purity. The beneficial effect of such a reformation would unquestionably be shewn by a more diligent attention to the improvement of our parochial musical service, and an increased attachment, on the part of the laity, to the established forms of worship. To the musical profession, the pending decision naturally awakens their curiosity, as it will disclose the degree of interest felt by the metropolitan Chapter for ecclesiastical music in general, and its performance at their own cathedral in particular.

The conduct of the musical service at St. Paul's should be held up as a pattern to all other cathedral and collegiate churches in the kingdom. If such a position should ever be attained by the metropolitan choir, their organist will not be the mere accompanist of a service or anthem, but a man who will be reckoned of all his competitors on the instrument, "*facile princeps*." He will be such a one as might now, within the compass of England, be chosen for Mr. Attwood's successor; a man known as a practised composer, of energetic and lively temperament, whose fertile imagination would enable him to produce new compositions for the high festivals of the church; anthems for the annual celebration at the cathedral of the charities, for performance at funerals, and in commemoration of remarkable national events; one who would be pronounced, by the unprejudiced, to be the best representative of the musical abilities and acquirements of the few labourers, who survive to cultivate our ecclesiastical vineyard; and who would doubtless continue to devote his talents to the service of the sanctuary.

The great evils in the selection of organists for our cathedrals, have been the appointment of individuals whose sole or principal claims to the distinction, were a choir education, competence to accompany the service, or a reputation for the composition of glees. The conventional knowledge usually acquired by a choir-boy, or an ability to accompany the cathedral service, may be speedily attained by an organist, who is endowed with an ordinary share of musical ability; but secular composition, unless grounded on the church style, weakens the intellectual powers, which are required for the highest strain of musical conception. *Grétry* well observes, that the church composer should ever recollect that "all the sentiments that rise to the Deity ought to have an undefinable and devout character. Every thing which lies beyond the reach of our knowledge raises a feeling of awe. A musician who devotes himself and his art to the sanctuary, is happy in being able to employ at his pleasure all the riches and resources of harmony, which the theatre will rarely permit. Music of an undefinable character has a charm far more potent than that which is declamatory, and sacred words alone will bear such music. Secular compositions may employ some of the forms which belong to the church, for we risk nothing in striving to ennoble the passions, which tend to the improvement and to the good of mankind: the first degrades itself if it wanders beyond its assigned limits; the second enriches itself by ennobling the qualities of the composition. The study of harmony, and *beau idéal* of harmonical combinations, ought to be the peculiar pursuit of the ecclesiastical composer. Every thing which is beyond our knowledge, be it mystery, or be it revelation, raises a feeling of awe, and excludes, for that reason, distinct expression. To lead the music of the church away from this undefinable mysteriousness is, then, I esteem, an error. Let us leave to that of the opera its appropriate advantages; and let us consider that the composer who devotes himself especially to the former, is happy in being able to avail himself of the metaphysical expression of which the language of music is susceptible."

And now, what has the church at St. Paul's effected for this noble style of writing in former times, by the encouragement of those whose genius and disposition led them to dedicate their lives to the music of the sanctuary. The only organists at St. Paul's of any great celebrity, as composers, since the Reformation, were Dr. Jeremiah Clarke, and Dr. Greene. Batten and Brind can scarcely be deemed to have established for themselves any considerable reputation. We find Pierson as the master of the boys, and Charles King, "the supernumerary singer, at fourteen pounds a year," of whom Dr. Green was accustomed sarcastically to observe, that "Mr. King was a very *serviceable* man," are the other departed luminaries of our metropolitan cathedral, with the exception of a greater than any we have enumerated—Jonathan Battishill, whom a former Dean and Chapter rejected as their organist. At Westminster Abbey, we trace among the organists the distinguished names of C. Gibbons, Blow, Purcell, Croft, Robinson, Arnold, B. and R. Cooke.

And now, on the occasion of the present vacancy what is contemplated? Is it intended to look around the profession for one who combines the scholar, the performer, and the gentleman? or is a mere accompanist to be selected, one who will follow in the old beaten track, superintend the "*serviceable*" compositions of the celebrated Mr. King, "the supernumerary, at fourteen pounds per

annum,"—manufacture "the thunder stop," by putting down, at random, his feet on the pedals and his arms on the manuals, and mingle, in unenviable confusion, the glee style with the mass of the Romanists, the garnish of modern days with the strong meat of our fathers. If it be decided to appoint one, who possesses a perfect knowledge of the great Protestant school of church music,—that school which grew out of the Reformation, and was in its glory in the golden days of Handel and Sebastian Bach; who combines also the ability and habit of composing for the church, and is, in addition, celebrated as an organ performer, the election narrows itself into a very small compass. If *merit* be the test, the scales will not long hang in uncertainty, for of the candidates how few have any pretensions to the character of the *musician*, how few are composers, how few possess any title to be ranked as organ players, beyond the bare requisites of an accompanist! Without particularizing the names of the candidates who are reputed to stand any chance of success, we will suggest the reasonableness of appointing no one of them to the office, *until he has been called upon to perform the duty*, and allowed, on that occasion, to have the selection of the services and anthems. If this trial of skill take place, and an individual from the provinces, whom we consider in all respects fitted to discharge the duties of the office, should appear among the candidates, he would, we are strongly persuaded, not only convince the Chapter, the choir, and the congregation of his indisputable superiority, but would also receive the suffrages of his fellow candidates, if any honesty or discrimination remained in their moral and intellectual constitution.

IMPORTANCE OF MUSICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

Or all the fine arts, music operates most powerfully upon man; even the deaf are known to experience some sensation from the effect of music.

Music acts upon the moral feeling. Simple and beautiful melodies refine it; pure and majestic harmonies connected with them, correct, ennoble, and confirm it; the significant and characteristic movement, order, and feeling of relation throughout, work powerfully on the mind, and the connexion of the parts, when properly displayed by a sufficient performer, awakens high and heavenly thoughts and elevates devotion.

A true and pure-minded artist or amateur, feels this continually in his own bosom. But base, impure, and lascivious music, has an effect directly contrary, and to this every European nation of the present time can bear witness. But in order to produce a good and great effect upon the minds of other men, the musician must be a good and great man himself.

The work of the composer can become effective only through the medium, and by the assistance, of many singers and instrumentalists; and these, besides possessing competent mechanical skill, ought to be sufficiently educated as men and artists, to enter into the mind of the composer, and think and feel with him.

Great composers can never be produced by any musical establishment, if they possess not that original genius, which includes in its own nature energy sufficient to triumph over all obstacles. Such require opportunities for the exertion of their talents, rather than instruction. But able and excellent performers of the works of great composers, can only be educated by means of musical establishments, where the art is not treated as one purely mechanical, but according to its true nature,—its affinities with the mind and the heart; and the young artist is, at the same time, formed into an honourable and noble-minded man.

This is an object which none but the musician, earnestly seeking the elevation of his art, can sufficiently feel and understand, to lay the first stone to such a work; but when once begun, numbers will be found ready to assist. Happy he who, with wisdom and timely assistance, is able to take the first step in an undertaking of this kind. A beautiful passage in reference to this subject, occurs in "Sulzer's Theory of the Fine Arts."—"The power to place the arts in the splendid position they once occupied, still exists; but because those possessing influence and authority, withhold the necessary encouragement, neglect to guide them to their true object, or merely turn them to purposes of luxury or refined pleasure, the artist, however highly his talents may be vaunted, is degraded into a mere

mechanic. He is looked upon as a man whose office it is to entertain the nobility or the public, and make time pass less heavily to the rich and luxurious. If wise laws and regulations are not provided to raise music from this state of degradation, and institutions found to apply it to its true purposes, the solitary and single endeavours of the best artist can be of little avail. From the blame due to this sad state of things, is many an artist, who would gladly raise himself to a higher position, exonerated; but it must be confessed, that the greater number coincide with the common opinion, that to entertain those enjoying riches and leisure is their whole business. But how can genius, resting on so weak a basis, ever rise to heaven? Whence can it derive elevation? Great talents are never roused by small considerations; and thus the most glorious and lovely gifts of genius, bestowed with no less liberality upon the moderns than upon the fathers of the art, lie for the most part disused and neglected."

HINTS ON THE EDUCATION OF AN ARTIST.

A PARENT who destines a child to the study and cultivation of the fine arts, should endeavour, from his earliest years, to invigorate and strengthen mind and body as far as possible, develope the powers and faculties of both to the utmost extent, and give him a high feeling for his noble vocation. For a weakly, delicately-nurtured, spoiled child is as little likely to turn out a great artist, as a happy man. Without vigour and flexibility of body, there is usually little elasticity of mind, or true and lasting energy of spirit; without an habitual willingness and ability to resist the allurements, and deny the low gratifications of this earthly state of being, he cannot attain the repose and serenity of spirit necessary to the full exertion of his nobler powers. He should be early taught that man is, through the path of virtue and self-denial, ennobled, and gradually fitted for a higher state of existence.

He will then begin to feel and acknowledge the relation in which he stands to his art, and his obligations to give up whatever may unfit him for its pursuit. He will diligently avoid whatever is low and debasing, and cultivate those pure high feelings, which, while they ennoble his own soul, cannot fail to appear in, and richly adorn his productions.

Nothing is more calculated to strew the path of human life with fair flowers, or to open in the soul a spring of enjoyment for all that is lovely in nature, than such a study of the fine arts. It leads the way to noble friendships, and the cherishing of pure affections. It seems to open a new world of beauty around us, and tends to exalt the soul to the only inexhaustible fount of all that is great or glorious; while it bids all who are truly nurtured under its wing, to despise the vanity, folly, and luxury, by which so many are led captive; are bound in chains which they are never able to break, and consume their life without any enjoyment of this, or hope of a better world. If any young student feels that ambition, love, worldly applause, riches, or any other objects of sense, be they of more or less value in the eye of the world;—if he feel, that any such vanities are dearer to him than his art, let him know that he is unfit for, and incapable of excelling in it. It has been said that "art is a jealous god;" but without elevating it into a divinity, it must be affirmed, that it requires a self denial and consecration of spirit, not commonly found among young artists. This is what music wants and requires in those who cultivate it, to raise it to its proper elevation in the eyes of good men.

REVIEW.

MUSIC IN THE EAST.

(Concluded from page 232.)

Time, in the acceptation it has in music, is called *Tal*. The origin of this word is said to be from *Tand*, the dance of Muhadew, and *Las*, that of his wife *Parvutee*; the first letters of which form the word *Tal*.

The Hindoostanees reckon an immense variety of times; but such as are now practised are limited to *ninety-two*, of which the author gives a table, explaining

their value in musical notes, with the use of the different species of accent. The accent seems to abound with a variety and means of expression, to which the European system can scarcely be said to afford a parallel.

The melody of the East has always been admired, and, as Capt. Willard believes, very justly; but so wide is the difference between our system and that of the Orientals, that many of the Eastern melodies would baffle the attempts of an expert contrapuntist to harmonize them by existing rules. Their authentic melody is limited to a certain number, said to have been composed by professors universally acknowledged to have possessed, not only real merit, but also the original genius of composition, beyond the precincts of whose authority it would be criminal to trespass (p. 47.) What the more reputed of the moderns have done is, that they have adapted them to their own purposes, and formed others by the combination of two or more together. Thus far they are licensed, but dare not proceed a step farther, as whatever merit an entirely modern composition might possess, should it have no resemblance to the established melody of the country, it would be looked upon as spurious. It is implicitly believed, that it is impossible to add, to the number of these, one single melody of equal merit,—so tenacious are the natives of Hindoostan of their ancient practices!

Thus we see, even in these countries, bigotry flourishes as it does elsewhere, and by all right-minded artists, *this* has been considered the grand obstruction to the elevation of every art, where this narrow and detestable feeling exists, and is sanctioned by authority. Is it not lamentable that talent and genius must for ever be fettered by scholastic pedants, whose minds are utterly incapable of appreciating anything but mechanical power, who would clog the wheels of that splendid machine, the imagination, by the constant impediment of rules; and bind down to earth the soul of music, which, but for their overbearing interference, would soar aloft, and imbibe from heaven the soul-inspired strain?

"The songsters of Hindoostan pretend, that any song sung out of the time appropriated for it, sounds uncouth. They allege that the times and seasons allotted to each melody, are those at which the *divinities are at leisure* to attend at the place where their favourite time is sung, and to inspire the performer with due warmth in his execution." (P. 54.)

Here we must remark the high feeling, although carried to a most absurd excess, with which all the eastern nations employed the poetical and musical arts; they were held sacred, and the performers were considered as inspired persons; the art by them was pursued with a serious devotedness, and earnest appreciation of the exalted purpose it was designed to fulfil, that may well put to shame many a mis-called modern professor. In the more remote patriarchal ages, when literature could scarcely be said to exist, and civilization had not extended the means of accumulating subjects upon which the bard might exercise his noble art, God and his attributes were the constant theme of the prophet-bards; this continued to supply mental food to the later and equally renowned poets, whose works continue to delight us. Homer, Dante, Ariosto, Milton, Cowper, Thomson, and Wordsworth, have all adopted similar means of exciting the mind, by the union of the most sublime subject with the most artful resources of genius.

When dissent from the worship of the Most High degenerated into idolatry, and from thence again branched off into the deification of real or imaginary persons, the systems both of poetry and music were regulated by all oriental nations according to the ramifications of divinity they had thus established, and by consequence, the immense variety (as observed) in the *Ragmala*, or personification of melodies arose. (P. 62.) Each of these deities were to be propitiated by tunes or airs, expressly intended to excite attention to their votaries, and whatever absurdities may be grafted on this plan as a mode of worship; the educated musician will at once discover what a prodigious field is opened in composition, especially of the imaginative class. In one mentioned by our author, "the god *Hindol* is represented seated in a golden swing, while a number of nymphs, by whom he is surrounded, amuse him with music, and keep time with the rocking of the swing in which he sits, indolently gazing on their charms, enjoying the sweets spontaneously offered to his shrine. His countenance is wan, which seems to indicate that although an immortal his constitution is impaired, &c. Another, called *Nut*, is a young maiden, who prefers the career of glory to that of pleasure.

She is adorned with jewels, and has clothed herself in man's attire, and being mounted on a furious steed, Minerva-like, engages in battle with those of the opposite sex; her countenance flushed with all the ardour and fatigues of such an undertaking."

The musical instruments of the country are many, but defective, the manufacture of them being entrusted to carpenters and other artificers, instead of properly qualified scientific men. The chief defect alluded to, is the radical imperfection which will not admit a change of key. They have no method of tuning their instruments to any certain pitch, but are guided in this respect merely by the ear.

The most prominent among their deities is the god *Crishnu*, whose attributes are a sort of amalgamation of those of *Cupid* and *Jupiter*, the hymns in which the Hindoos celebrate his actions, always having love for their theme. "Some adore him as a god, others esteem him as a lover; and a few treat him as an impudent fellow," which latter title he has earned by his daring exploits among the maidens who come to draw water from the *Jumna*.

"To comprehend the songs of this country, and to relish their beauties, we must figure to ourselves Hindoostan, not in the state which it is in at present, but must transport ourselves back to those earlier ages to which allusions are made by them—when each region was possessed by petty chieftains, each arbitrary in their respective dominions—when no high roads existed, the communication between one village and another being maintained by narrow footpaths; and rude mountains and jungles formed the natural barrier of the chiefs—when navigation by river was as impracticable as travelling by land—when topography was almost unknown, and the advice of a stranger adventitiously met, was to be cautiously embraced:"—to the time, in short, when parting even for a journey to an adjoining village, was accompanied by mutual tears, and prayers for safe return. A distant tour, such as in these days is looked upon with indifference, was formerly contemplated and consulted for a year or two before undertaken; and when a man who had accomplished his purpose, returned home in safety, after encountering all the hardships incident to it, the wonderful recital of his adventures, the skill with which he conducted himself in the presence of princes, his valour and intrepidity in times of danger, his cunning and foresight in preventing or avoiding the toils of the evil-minded, and all these exaggerated by the vanity of the traveller, formed the theme of admiration to the village, and the subject of pride to his relatives, not soon likely to be forgot. It is observed by the author of "An inquiry into the life and writings of Homer," page 26, "that it has not been given by the gods to one and the same country, to produce rich crops and warlike men; neither indeed does it seem to be given to one and the same kingdom, to be thoroughly civilized, and afford proper subjects for poetry." It is this which renders Hindoostanee songs flat and unpalatable, unless we transport ourselves back to their barbarous and heroic ages.—Their abhorrence of innovation induces them to retain their ancient ways of thinking, or at least to unite their manner of thinking in times of yore, notwithstanding the changes introduced by time.

The tenor of Hindoostanee love ditties, generally is upon one or more of the following themes:—

1. Beseeching the lover to be propitious.
2. Lamentations for the absence of the object loved.
3. Imprecating of rivals.
4. Complaints of inability to meet the lover, from the watchfulness of the mother and sisters-in-law, and the tinkling of little bells* worn as ornaments round the waist and ancles, called *payel*, *bichhooa*, &c.
5. Fretting, and making use of invectives against the mother and sisters-in-law, as being obstacles in the way of her love.
6. Exclamations to female friends termed *Sukhees*, and supplicating their assistance; and
7. *Sukhees* reminding their friends of the appointment made, and exhorting them to persevere in their love.

* "A girdle of small bells is a favourite Hindu ornament; also silver circles at the ancles and wrists, which emit a ringing noise as the wearer moves."—Wilson's *Megha Duta*, p. 83, l. 514.

The conquest of Hindoostan by the Mahomedan princes, forms a most important epoch in the history of its music. From this time we may date the decline of all arts and sciences purely Hindoo, for the Mahomedans were no great patrons of learning, and the more bigotted of them were not only great iconoclasts, but discouragers of the learning of the country. The progress of the theory of music once arrested, its decline was speedy; although the practice, which contributed to the entertainment of the princes and nobles, continued until the time of Mohummud Shah, after whose reign history is pregnant with facts replete with dismal scenes. But the practice of so fleeting and perishable a science as that of a succession of sounds, without a knowledge of the theory to keep it alive, or any mode to record it on paper, dies with the professor.

Dr. Burney, in his notice of Hebrew music, hazards the assertion that we have no authentic account of any nation except the Egyptians, where music had been cultivated so early as the days of David and Solomon; the Greeks at that time having hardly invented their rudest instruments. But this is a gratuitous assumption on the part of the worthy doctor, and a reference to the treatise we are now reviewing, would alone suffice to controvert this hasty opinion. Look to the fact also, of the Arabians having invented upwards of thirty different musical instruments including the bagpipe,* commonly believed to have first appeared in Scotland. Besides, we should remember that, "even before man existed, the melodies of nature must have sounded for ages unheard; companions in waste and non-enjoyment to the glories of that magnificent vegetation which, when man awoke, he found buried in dark transmutation beneath his feet. The seven notes, it has been shewn, are absolute existences in nature. Physical bodies and air are every where, and must have been at all times capable of producing them."—(See article *Music*, No. 321, Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.)

The Hindoos although an idolatrous, were never so luxurious and vicious a nation as their conquerors the Mahomedans; most of the vices existing in this country having been introduced after the conquest. The songs of the Aborigines of Hindoostan, will bear comparison with those of any other country, for purity and chasteness of diction, and elevation and tenderness of sentiment.

Amongst the most ancient musicians of this country, who are reckoned inventors, compilers, and masters of the science, the most prominent are *Sumesh-veur*, *Bhurut*, *Hunooman*, *Coolnath*, these have all left treatises on the art. *Haha*, *Vayoo*, *Shesh*, *Narud* (the Mooni or devotee) *Cushyup* (another Mooni,) *Hoohoo*, *Ravrm*, *Disha*, and *Urjoon*.

The ancient singers who are not acquainted with the theory of Music, are termed *Gundharbs* and *Gooneurs*; they are very numerous, and some of them still perform in the presence of Julul ood deen Mohummud Nebur, king of Delhi. Space will not allow of further extracts from this little work; enough has been said to shew its value as the most complete treatise extant on the subject, the perusal of which will amply repay the enquirer in such department of musical literature.

METROPOLITAN CONCERTS.

During the last week, Mr. Cart, on Tuesday, held his first musical flute *soirée*, at the Hanover-square rooms; Mr. Ribas took his benefit concert, on Wednesday evening, at the same place; and Miss Steele, on Friday evening, assembled her friends at the Music Hall, Store-street. Mr. Cart's vocal support consisted of Mrs. Alfred Shaw, Misses Rainforth, Birch, and F. Woodham, Signor Begrez, Messrs. H. Phillips, and Parry, jun: Mrs. Anderson, Messrs. Blagrove, Richardson, Clinton, assisted in the instrumental department. Mr. Ribas was aided by the vocal and instrumental talents of Mrs. Bishop, Misses Birch, Nunn, C. Richardson, Messrs. Horncastle, Stretton, Signor De Begnis, A. L. Ribas, and an able band, led by Mr. Mori. Mrs. Bishop and Miss Birch sang remarkably well, and Miss Richardson is a very charming performer on the harp. Mr. Ribas, on the flute, and Mr. A. L. Ribas on the oboe, were highly successful. At the Music Hall, on Friday evening, we heard Madlle. Eckerlin,

* See Colonel Johnson's overland journey to India, and for a list of Arabian instruments, page 168, Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 30, which forms part of an excellent paper on ancient Music.

Miss Birch, Miss Nunn, and the *debutante*, Messrs. Wilson, Martin, J. O. Atkins, Signora Curioni and De Begnis. The instrumentalists, Miss Chipp (pupil of Madame Dulcken), Messrs. Chatterton, Mori, Lindley, and Signor Puzzi. Each of the concerts was conducted by Sir George Smart, and well attended.

THE SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.—The large room at Exeter Hall was on Tuesday evening crowded to excess, to hear the repetition of Handel's *Messiah*. The room, if it can be imagined possible, appears fuller on every succeeding performance. The public flock in crowds without any solicitation, and manifest, in the clearest manner, their opinion of, and love for, music in its most exalted and dignified forms. There is now no "getting up" an oratorio performance in the metropolis, no need of any wretched quackery in the shape of puffing advertisements; a simple announcement, and a few rehearsals, afford an opportunity of witnessing a performance of choral music, which will shortly be without parallel in Europe. The *Messiah* of Handel, as it is the most familiar of all his oratorios, so it always falls the freshest and most grateful on the ear. Genius has always something to surprise and astonish; and each repetition of its conceptions is an increased proof of its power; a new display of its miraculous beauties, its inexplicable prodigies. The solos were distributed amongst Mrs. Alfred Shaw, Misses Birch, and Woodyatt, Messrs. Phillips, Bennet, Turner, and I. O. Atkins; Miss Jenkins, and Mr. Willing assisting in the concerted movements. Mrs. Shaw's performance is the offspring of deep feeling and correct judgment; her style is purity itself, divested of all the spurious finery, the glittering tinsel which, we regret to observe, is getting prevalent. Miss Birch added much to what was set down for her, and that which neither evinced good taste, nor showed any talent in its execution; for even Miss Woodyatt, at the close of her performance of "But thou did'st not leave," imitated, or "took off," with marvellous facility, the cadenza appended by Miss Birch to "Rejoice greatly." This lady is adopting a style of ornament which succeeded some years ago, but is fast growing into disrepute, and will soon be universally discountenanced. If we did not admire her talents, and expect great things of her at no distant day, we should not take and undergo the pain of assuring Miss Birch, that although such graces may please uncultivated ears and unfurnished heads, they will never acquire for her that applause, which will make either her fortune or her fame. We presume thinking and feeling, with Mr. Bennett, have grown out of fashion. When a second-rate singer, like this gentleman, aspires to make variations upon the "Comfort ye my people," it is time for the most indulgent of critics to reprobate so glaring an absurdity. The recitative of Handel is declamatory, not a vocal exercise. If it possess, in the opinion of Mr. Bennett, no intrinsic value, no meaning, or truth, still it affords no ground in which to transplant the vulgarities of Covent-garden. So to misuse it, affords incontrovertible proof of a depraved taste, or a lamentable deficiency of judgment.

Mr. Phillips sang in his most impressive manner. Mr. Atkins also pleased much in "Why do the nations." The choruses, those in-woven and splendid masses of choral harmony, we can always listen to with a rapture which never tires; and so thought the assembled thousands who welcomed the performers at the close, with a long-continued demonstration of triumphant joy.

QUARTETT CONCERTS.—The last concert of the series for the present season was given by Mr. Blagrove and his friends on Thursday last, to an assembly which included most of our metropolitan *dilettanti*, who exhibit an undiminished regard for this intellectual and refined style of musical composition. Messrs. Blagrove, Gattie, Dando, and Lucas, from their incessant practice together of new, rare, and beautiful compositions, have acquired such perfect harmony of purpose, and unity of expression in their concerted performances, that the compositions brought forward by them have the effect of being played rather by one pair of hands than the contribution of several. The prominent feature of the evening was the trio in E flat, by Beethoven, Op. 70, executed by Moscheles, Blagrove, and Lucas. It was performed most beautifully, and met with a rapturous approval. Haydn's quartett in G, and Beethoven's in E minor, Op. 59, were in excellent contrast; instinct with the charming and graceful, the sparkling and joyous, the bold and energetic. They were exquisitely played, and listened to on the part of the

audience with a degree of sympathy, which must have contributed to the successful exertions of the performers. The vocalists, Mrs. Shaw, Misses Birch, and F. Woodham, in the compositions by Beethoven, Haydn, and Schubert, entered with heart and soul into the pieces allotted to them, and furnished another instance of the ability of our native artists to sing with expression and effect the highest order of vocal composition. The concert gave the utmost satisfaction, and was a worthy termination to the series.

THEATRICAL SUMMARY.

"Nothing new under the sun," said the wisest of mankind. And certainly there has not been even the semblance of novelty during the past fortnight in the theatrical world, except what the two managerial benefits at the larger houses have presented; and there we feel ourselves on interdicted ground. It seems ungracious to notice what is done on such occasions, unless we can give unqualified praise; and this again wears a suspicious look. So that we judge it the wiser policy to say nothing of the matter. May our silence meet with as lucky an interpretation as that of Horace,

"Jurantes nos scire nihil, mirantur, ut unum
Schleiet egregii mortalem altique silentii."

The present week, too, is a holiday to the profession, and, of course, to critics. But it is one of preparation as well. Nearly all the theatres are actively employed in producing some marvel or other to astonish and delight on Easter Monday. It is a time-honoured custom that should be duly observed. When the progress of intellect puts a stop to the production of Easter pieces, the world will become infinitely too wise for happiness.

Mr. C. Kean has set out on a short tour to the provinces. He had done better to have gone some time since, for his prolonged stay here has not been for his health, we mean his reputation's health. If he would preserve it, he should never act in town longer than a month or six weeks at once. As we have already said, a season would be fatal to him. This has been manifested by the defalcation both in receipts and applause of late. The cheers have been few and far between, and on several occasions the audience has not called for him after the play; a stupid and degrading custom, indeed, but considered by actors an honour. In fact—the fear is ripening. We see and speak of these things gladly, not out of ill-will to the individual, who in himself is we believe most deserving, but out of regard for his art. Could the public be brought to receive "inexplicable dumb show and noise" for fine acting, the genii of Covent Garden and Drury Lane would have to vacate their seats, and submissively summon in their stead the Gog and Magog who used to stretch their leaden sceptres over the Coburg.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

The first novelty of the season has been the production of Donizetti's opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, of which the prominent incidents are taken from Walter Scott's celebrated tale "The Bride of Lammermoor." The Italian playwright has, however, so mutilated the original work, by the suppression of much that contributes to its chief interest, and so distorted its character, by a perfect disregard of the unity of the story, that the *libretto* indicates little pretension to a dramatic entertainment, although it certainly deserved a greater share of consideration from the composer. The opera divides itself into three acts. In the first Ashton (Tamburini,) learns the intimacy existing between his sister Lucy (Persiani,) and Ravenswood (Rubini.) This introduces an energetic aria, "*Cruda funesta mania*," in which Tamburini showers down wrathful denunciations against both delinquents. The next scene is a meeting between Lucy and Ravenswood, the avowal of his departure to France, a tender upbraiding from the lady, followed by a mutual vow of fidelity, which, on the part of Ravenswood, is strengthened by the putting a ring on the lady's finger. The movements, "*Perchè non ho del vento*," "*Torna, torna, o caro oggetto*," "*Sulla tomba*," "*Deh ti placa*," and the duet "*Verranno a te*," show off the voices to the best advantage; and there was a warm-hearted truthfulness in Madame Persiani's delineation of the character of Lucy, which spoke highly for her talents as an actress.

The second act is short. Ashton forces Lucy into a marriage with Bucklaw (Tati); but the ceremonial is darkened by the sudden return of Ravenswood, who, amidst the threatenings of the gentlemen, expostulates with the lady on her supposed perfidy; resumes possession of the ring, and leaves the place pouring forth his maledictions on all parties. The duet "*Se tradirmi tu potrai*," and the concerted movement at the bridal rite, are the best features of this act, wherein Persiani displayed more grief and tenderness, Rubini more passion and energy, than are wont to be found on these boards: but at length the intensity of their expression led them to neglect their natural powers so far, that each ended in singing quite out of the scale. In the third act Ashton challenges Ravenswood, Lucy murders the laird, goes mad, and Ravenswood, instead of keeping the hostile appointment with Ashton, buries his poignard in his breast. The mad scene of Lucy, and the farewell of Ravenswood, "*O bell' alma innamorata*," are interesting, and engage the sympathies of the spectators; in which both Rubini and the *prima donna* sang with a finish, brilliance, inspiration, and depth of expression, that called forth overpowering demonstration of applause.

There are one or two good situations for the display of declamatory recitative; but of which the composer has not availed himself: and although the principal performers are entitled to the highest commendation, the composer, in the present instance, may be dismissed with a moderate share of approval. The house has been well attended; and on Thursday and Saturday was graced by the presence of Her Majesty. Rubini and Tamburini, on their first appearance, were received with that cordial welcome, which the recollection of their past exploits on the boards of this Theatre naturally elicited.

CHIT-CHAT FROM THE CONTINENT.

FIRST CONCERT OF THE CONSERVATOIRE AT BRUSSELS.—This concert took place on the 18th of February, and excited the liveliest interest in the audience. The seventh of Beethoven's symphonies, the overture to *Fidelio*, and the finale of the first part of Haydn's *Creation* were the principal pieces of the concert; and were given with a truth and delicate discrimination of light and shade beyond all praise. The execution of these master-pieces has discovered to the public the existence of an orchestra, which rivals that of the conservatoire at Paris. A remarkable change has taken place in public opinion during the last five years. The sublime compositions of Beethoven were then known only by name, and listened to with coldness and *ennui*, and these very compositions are now everywhere received with bursts of admiration.

THE ITALIAN OPERA IN PARIS.—*March 30.*—Our Italian Opera will terminate to-morrow, a season, which has been a succession of crowded houses. The ill effects of the fire which destroyed the old Theatre have, however, been felt by the audience, who have found in the *Salle Ventadour*, an ugly and inharmonious building, dirty and inappropriate scenery, and dresses neither intended for the wearers, or their characters.—Unincumbered by a ballet, the Italian Opera in Paris, from the strength of its company, and the convenient size of the Theatre, has long wanted little of perfection in its style, save precision in its chorus; an advantage rarely found, though of easy attainment. The difficulty of an Italian chorus cannot certainly be pleaded in excuse of its bad performance; badly performed however it is, and as badly here as in London. How different is the faultless accuracy of the German, from the annoying independence of a French, or Anglo-Italian chorus. Chorus singers should live under a despotism. It strikes me also, that the orchestra this year has wanted somewhat of its generally very remarkable precision.

The principal old operas of the season, have been the *Puritani*, *Matrimonio Segreto*, *Cenerentola*, *Norma*, *Sonnambula*, and the *Capo d'Opera* of Mozart, *Il Don Giovanni*. These are all too well known to require a word of comment. But where are the two new operas, which Paris each year presents to the musical world?

We have had, however, two operas of some four or five years standing, by Donizetti, both new to the stage in Paris and London; *Lucia di Lammermoor*

and Parisina. Donizetti is unquestionably gifted with a genius for melody; but he has no ideas of dramatic effect; he may be (no one would suspect it) in the first rank of modern theoretic musicians, yet nineteen in twenty of his operas, more numerous, I believe, than Rossini's, are not worth the hearing. Alas! he will write, "stans pede in uno." He writes for money alone, and cannot afford more than six weeks to an opera.

The *Lucia* contains some music of an attractive character; the finale in which Ravenswood finds that the lady has signed her betrothal with his rival, is rendered almost equal to the striking beauty of the situation in Scott's exquisite romance, by the splendid performances of Persiani, and Tamburini. The tenor music was written at Parma for Duprez; the new tenor at the Academie Royale, and is therefore well adapted for the voice and style of Rubini, who sung it, as he always sings music that suits him, leaving the critic bankrupt in admiration.

The story of Parisina is as well known, as the *Bride of Lammermoor*. It should never have been dramatized. Romani, the only operatic poet since Metastasio, is the author of the libretto, and in fitting it for the stage, has left it a tame, and commonplace love story. Donizetti has caught the spirit of his author, and has illustrated it in a tame, and commonplace opera, which contains but little pretty music, and none which deserves any higher praise. The best piece is a quartet in the finale to second act. This opera was written for Ungher, Coselli, and Donzelli, and has been performed in Paris, by Grisi, Tamburini, and Rubini. The weight of the opera is with the *Prima Donna*, and Grisi did not miss the opportunity of distinguishing herself greatly. Tamburini acted, and sung the part of the Duke with great spirit and discrimination. His dress, and bearing, contrasted with that of Rubini, who, in helmet and cuirass, was the personification of awkwardness, left Parisina without the shade of an excuse for her guilty preference of the latter. Music written for Donzelli, is obviously unsuited to Rubini, who, however, did more for it than it deserved. His sympathies are evidently less interested in the love-sick Ugo, than in the haughty and illfated Ravenswood, in which latter character, the intense passion of his singing, in one of the scenes, forces him, in spite of himself, into fine acting.

It is said that Rubini retires to Italy (he has *carte blanche* at the Scala) after singing for this season in London. He himself has said so, and I fear he means it. He has no children, and is therefore content with the fortune he has already made. What a pity that he has not as many brats as Priam, or Tamburini! I imagine, however, that ill health has, in some degree, influenced this determination. Ill health which has not as yet affected his voice, but which is, I fear, plainly written in his countenance. This great singer is the most favoured of the favourites at Paris. Much as he is admired in London, I think the Parisians understand him better.

COURT CIRCULAR.

HER MAJESTY and her august mother attended divine service on Sunday morning in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. Her Majesty the Queen Dowager, and His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, also attended the service.

The musical service was Arnold's in C. The Archbishop of Canterbury preached the sermon. The anthem was "Who is he that cometh from Edom," (Arnold). Sir George Smart presided at the organ. The Bishop of Norwich was the Clerk of the Closet in waiting.

The Queen honoured the performance of the Opera of *Lucia di Lammermoor* on Saturday evening, at Her Majesty's theatre, with her presence. The Duchess of Kent accompanied Her Majesty. The Queen was attended by Lady Portman, the Lord Chamberlain, Viscount Falkland, Mr. Rich, and Colonel Wemyss. Lady Mary Stopford was in waiting on the Duchess of Kent.

The Princess Augusta attended divine service on Sunday at St. Philip's Chapel, Regent Street. Her Royal Highness was attended by Lady Mary Pelham.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We regret that it has been out of our power to insert notices of many recent concerts in the provinces; but our Correspondents must be aware that the metropolitan meetings, and, *ceteris paribus*, our advertising friends are entitled to the preference.

Mrs BIRCH, on a re-perusal of our notice of the last Vocal Concert will perceive that we make substantially the same statement as is contained in her letter.

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- I.—The Competitors may select either of the above sets of words.
- II.—The Compositions addressed to the "Secretary of the Dublin Ancient Concerts," must be sent to Messrs. Robinson and Busell, 7, Westmorland-street, Dublin; to Mr. J. A. Novello, 69, Dean Street, Soho; or to Mr. Willis, 75, Lower Grosvenor Street, London, before the 1st of October, 1836.
- III.—Each Candidate must forward one set of Single Voice Parts, and a Pianoforte score of each Com position which he proposes for competition.
- IV.—Each Composition must be marked with the same name or motto, and enclosing the real name and address of the Composer; that envelope alone will be opened which bears the name or motto of the successful Com position, the others will be destroyed.
- V.—All the MSS. to become the property of the Society, the Copyright remaining with the Composer.
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